

Waterline Model: A Diagnosis Tool

What:

Effective teams are finely attuned to their internal as well as their external components. The Effective Team Model shows both operational and relational factors that make up a high-performing team. However, even the most dynamic and high-performing teams run into periods of lower function/dysfunction. The Waterline Model helps the team pay attention to its maintenance issues by serving two goals: accomplishment of goals and enhancement of the work relationships of group members

When:

The Waterline Model is a useful diagnostic tool for when:

- Teams seem to be working as hard or even harder than normal, yet the tasks and goals of the team are not being met as quickly or efficiently as the team envisioned
- There is some dissonance within the team membership that is leading to inefficiency and dysfunction.

Principles for diagnosis:

- Groups become stuck mostly because of structure and process problems; not because of technical difficulties
- There are four categories of Team Diagnosis: Structure, Group Process, 1-1 Process and Individual Process
- Intervene from: 1) Structure - ("shallow") to 4) Intra-personal - ("deep")

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How:

1. Notice when you think a group is stuck - stop "task" talk and start "maintenance" talk.
2. Invite the team members to articulate their diagnosis and share your diagnosis with them.
3. Remember that the majority of team interventions focus on the first two levels: Structure ("What is happening with our team roles or processes that is leading to this issue?) or Group ("What systems do we have in place that support the members of the group") - see Model on next page for examples

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4.

